



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Decision Document signed for South Entrance Road Improvements at Grand Canyon National Park

Grand Canyon, Ariz. – A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed yesterday by Michael D. Snyder, Regional Director for Intermountain Region of the National Park Service for the implementation of improvements to the South Entrance Road (Highway 64) between the community of Tusayan and the entrance station, located on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park.

The purpose of these improvements is to provide an effective system that would address the crowding and safety issues that can occur during the high visitor use season, as well as to improve the experience of those entering the park through the South Entrance. Although some improvements have recently been implemented at the South Entrance to address these issues, the additional improvements are planned to further improve conditions.

Actions under the preferred alternative include construction of up to two additional northbound lanes, approximately 1 mile long and construction of a ½ mile long independent bypass lane. The park is working with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to address the proposed work in the ADOT easement, south of the park boundary.

The road improvements in the preferred alternative were considered in a larger planning effort for the upcoming South Rim Visitor Transportation Plan Environmental Assessment (Transportation Plan) expected to be released in fall 2007. This project was separated from the

larger plan to expedite implementation and address visitor experience and safety concerns. Although this project would precede the finalization of the Transportation Plan, it would ensure compatibility with future transportation options.

In July 2007 the National Park Service (NPS) prepared an Environmental Assessment / Assessment of Effect (EA/AEF) for the South Entrance Road Improvements. This EA/AEF, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, analyzed the impacts that will likely result from implementation of the project. The EA/AEF evaluated one alternative for addressing the purpose and need for action, as well as a no action alternative (Alternative A, No Action) for comparison with the action alternative. The EA/AEF was available for a 30-day public comment period.

The Regional Director concluded that implementation of the preferred alternative for improving the road does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and is not an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

Construction is anticipated to begin as early as March 2008. Construction activities related to the road widening will occur outside of peak visitation times whenever possible. Traffic congestion and slowing will occur during this period and the park will make efforts to minimize the impact of construction on visitors entering the park through the south entrance. A construction schedule will be announced prior to the beginning of construction activities. The project is expected to be completed by November 2008.

All those that commented on the July 2007 Environmental Assessment will be receiving a printed copy of the FONSI. Those interested in viewing the FONSI, may do so on the National Park Service Planning, Environment and Public Comment website at (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca>). For questions and additional information about this project please contact Rachel Stanton, Project Compliance Lead at (928) 774-9612 or Vicky Stinson, Project Manager at (928) 774-3026.

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